NORTHERN COMMITTEE

RESUMED MEETING OF THE TWENTY-SECOND REGULAR SESSION (NC22-2)

10:00 am – 14:00 pm (Pohnpei Time), 11 November 2026

Online

Proposal for Conservation and Management Measure for Pacific Bluefin Tuna

WCPFC-NC22(2)-2026-DP01

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Submitted by Japan

Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT MEASURE FOR PACIFIC BLUEFIN TUNA

Conservation and Management Measure 2026-xx ~~2024-01~~

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC):

Recognizing that WCPFC6 adopted Conservation and Management Measure for Pacific bluefin tuna (CMM 2009-07) and the measure was revised thirteen~~twelve~~ times since then (CMM 2010-04, CMM 2012-06, CMM 2013-09, CMM 2014-04, CMM 2015-04, CMM 2016-04, CMM2017-08, CMM 2018-02, CMM 2019-02, CMM 2020-02, CMM 2021-02~~ and~~ CMM 2023-02 and CMM 2024-01) based on the conservation advice from the International Scientific Committee for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (ISC) on this stock;

Noting the latest stock assessment provided by ISC in 2024, indicating the following:

- Spawning stock biomass (SSB) has increased substantially in the last 12 years, and achieved its second rebuilding target (20%$SSBF_{=0}$) in 2021;
- A substantial decrease in estimated F has been observed in ages 0-2 in 2020-2022 relative to 2002-2004 and 2012-2014;
- Since the early 1990s, the WCPO purse seine fisheries, in particular those targeting small fish (age 0-1) have had an increasing impact on the spawning stock biomass, but its impact has reduced in recent years;
- Harvesting small fish has a greater impact on future spawning stock biomass than harvesting large fish of the same amount;
- The projection results indicate that increases of catch limits are possible while maintaining SSB greater than 20%SSBF=0 with a 60% probability under several scenarios requested by JWG8, and while allowing SSB to steadily increase above the second rebuilding target under additionally requested certain scenarios; and
- The projection results also indicate that the maximum allowable transfer from small fish catch limits to large fish catch limits utilizing the conversion factor has a positive effect on future SSB.

Recognizing that the Management Procedure for Pacific bluefin tuna, developed as the Conservation and Management Measures (CMM 2026-XX), provides the basis for determining total allowable catches for the WCPO small fish, WCPO large fish, and EPO;

Noting the conversion factors calculated by the ISC in 2025 to facilitate the transfer of catch among different fishing sectors while maintaining the overall spawning potential ratio (SPR);

Further Noting the conservation advice from the ISC that research on a recruitment index for the stock assessment should be pursued, and maintenance of a reliable adult abundance index should be ensured;

Recalling that paragraph (4) of the Article 22 of the WCPFC Convention, which requires cooperation between the Commission and the IATTC to reach agreement to harmonize CMMs for fish stocks such as

Pacific bluefin tuna that occur in the convention areas of both organizations;

Also recalling Article 10 (1) (a) of the WCPF Convention, which provides that the Commission may determine the total allowable catch or total level of fishing effort within the Convention Area for such highly migratory fish stocks and decide and adopt such other conservation and management measures and recommendations as may be necessary to ensure the long-term sustainability of such stocks without prejudice to the sovereign rights of coastal States for the purpose of exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing highly migratory fish stocks within areas under national jurisdiction;

Conscious of the need to identify, analyze and respond to the impacts of ~~climate change~~environmental dynamics on the tuna and tuna-like species in the North Pacific Ocean in a timely manner to enhance the effectiveness of the conservation and management for the species;

Adopts, in accordance with Article 10 of the WCPFC Convention that:

General Provision

1. This conservation and management measure has been prepared to implement the Management Procedure~~Harvest Strategy~~ for Pacific Bluefin Tuna Fisheries (CMM 2026-xx~~Harvest Strategy 2023-02~~)~~, and the Northern Committee shall periodically review and recommend revisions to this measure as needed to implement the Harvest Strategy~~.

Management measures

2. In the WCPFC Convention area in 2027-2028, combined total catches of Pacific bluefin tuna less than 30 kg and Pacific bluefin tuna 30 kg or larger by all CCMs shall not exceed the WCPO total allowable biennial catch limit of 9,646 metric tons and 30,232 metric tons, respectively.

2bis. CCMs shall take measures necessary to ensure that total fishing effort by their vessel fishing for Pacific bluefin tuna in the area north of the 20° N shall stay below the 2002–2004 annual average levels.

3. During 2027-2028, Japan, Korea and Chinese Taipei shall, respectively, take measures necessary to ensure that its catches of Pacific bluefin tuna less than 30 kg and Pacific bluefin tuna 30 kg or larger shall not exceed the ~~annual~~ biennial catch limits in the tables below, without prejudice to future agreement on allocation of TAC. Within the biennium, Japan, Korea and Chinese Taipei also shall not exceed the one-year maximum catch limits in the tables below.

Pacific Bluefin tuna less than 30kg

	2002-2004 average annual level	~~Annual~~ Initial biennium catch limit in 2027-2028	One-year maximum in 2027-2028
Japan	8,015 metric tons	~~[~~8,294~~]~~ metric tons	~~[~~5,183~~]~~ metric tons
Korea	1,435 metric tons	~~[~~1,352~~]~~ metric tons	~~[~~845~~]~~ metric tons

Pacific Bluefin tuna 30kg or larger

	2002-2004 average annual level	~~Annual~~ Initial biennium catch limit in 2027-2028	One-year maximum in 2027-2028
Japan	4,882 metric tons	~~[~~21,052~~]~~ metric tons	~~[~~13,157~~]~~ metric tons
Korea	0 metric tons	~~[~~1,252~~]~~ metric tons	~~[~~782~~]~~ metric tons

Chinese Taipei	1,709 metric tons	[7,368] metric tons	[4,605] metric tons

4. CCMs with a base line catch (2002-2004 average annual level) of 10 tons or less of Pacific bluefin tuna 30 kg or larger may increase their catch as long as it does not exceed 10 metric tons per year. During 2027-2028, ~~T~~the biennial catch limit of Pacific bluefin tuna 30 kg or larger for New Zealand shall be [200]400 metric tonnes ~~per year~~, ~~and~~ for Australia [40]80 metric tonnes ~~per year~~, and for the United States [80] metric tonnes, taking into account their nature as bycatch fisheries conducted in their waters ~~in the Southern hemisphere~~.[1]
5. Any overage or underage of the biennium catch limit shall be deducted from or may be added to the catch limit for the following biennium~~year~~. The maximum underage that a CCM may carry over in any given ~~year~~ biennium shall not exceed 17% of its ~~annual~~ biennial initial catch limit.[2]
6. ~~CCMs~~Japan and Korea ~~described in paragraph 3~~ may use part of the catch limit for Pacific bluefin tuna smaller than 30kg stipulated in paragraph 3 above to catch Pacific bluefin tuna 30kg or larger in the same year. In this case, the amount of catch 30kg or larger shall be counted against the catch limit for Pacific bluefin tuna smaller than 30kg.[3] CCMs shall not use the catch limit for Pacific bluefin tuna 30kg or larger to catch Pacific bluefin tuna smaller than 30kg. ~~ISC shall review the use of the conversion factor by 2028. To facilitate the review of this conversion factor, the ISC Pacific Bluefin Tuna Working Group (PBFWG) shall identify the data requirements for the analysis, and Japan and Korea shall provide the data identified by the PBFWG in 2027 and 2028.~~
7. CCMs are encouraged to conduct research activities to collect reliable indices of recruitment stock and adult spawning stock. Notwithstanding paragraph 3 and 4, setting a catch limit dedicated for research activities to develop and maintain indices may be considered by WCPFC through the Northern Committee based on research plans reviewed and supported by the ISC.
8. All CCMs except Japan shall implement the limits in paragraph 3 on a calendar-year basis. Japan shall implement the limits using a management year other than the calendar year for some of its fisheries and have its implementation assessed with respect to its management year. To facilitate the assessment, Japan shall:
    a. Use the following management years:
        1. For its fisheries licensed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, use the calendar year as the management year.

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[1] ~~New Zealand and Australia may carry forward up to 35 tonnes per year and 10 tonnes per year, respectively, from 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 to 2023 and 2024. This special arrangement does not create any precedent in future management.~~

[2] Any overage or underage of the catch limit in 2026 shall be deducted from or may be added to the biennial catch limit for 2027-2028. The maximum underage that a CCM may carry over in 2026 shall not exceed 17% of its initial catch limit~~Notwithstanding paragraph 5, a CCM may carry over up to 17% of its initial catch limits in 2026, which remain uncaught, to 2027-2028~~.

[3] During 2027-2028, ~~A CCM~~Japan and Korea may count the amount of catch 30kg or larger adjusted with the conversion factor ~~0.68~~6.37 (catch 30kg or larger multiplied by ~~0.68~~1/6.37) against the catch limit for Pacific bluefin tuna smaller than 30kg up to 20% and 35% of its initial biennium catch limit, respectively. Beyond the 20% and 35%, such CCMs may count the amount of catch 30kg or larger adjusted with the conversion factor 1.47 against the catch limit for Pacific bluefin tuna smaller than 30kg. The ISC Pacific Bluefin Tuna Working Group (PBFWG) shall review the use of the conversion factor by 2028, and Japan and Korea shall provide the data identified by the PBFWG in 2027 and 2028.

2. For its other fisheries, use 1 April – 31 March as the management year.[4]

b. In its annual reports for PBF, for each category described in a.1 and a.2 above, complete the required reporting template for both the management year and calendar year clearly identifying fisheries for each management year.

9. CCMs shall report to the Executive Director by 15 June each year their fishing effort and <30 kg and >=30 kg catch levels, by fishery, for the previous 3 years, accounting for all catches, including discards. CCMs shall report their ~~annual~~ catch limits and their ~~annual~~ catches of PBF, with adequate computation details, to present their implementation for paragraph 5 and 6, if the measures and arrangements in the said paragraphs and relevant footnotes applied. For this purpose, CCMs ~~are encouraged to use the~~ shall report their catch limit implementation using the tables ~~as shown~~ in **Attachment 1**. The Executive Director will compile this information each year into an appropriate format for the use of the Northern Committee.

10. CCMs shall intensify cooperation for effective implementation of this CMM, including juvenile catch reduction. For this purpose, CCMs will make every effort to prevent their catch of age-0 fish (less than 2kg) from increasing beyond their 50% of 2002-2004 levels.

11. CCMs, in particular those catching juvenile Pacific bluefin tuna, shall take measures to monitor and obtain prompt results of recruitment of juveniles each year.

12. Consistent with their rights and obligations under international law, and in accordance with domestic laws and regulations, CCMs shall, to the extent possible, take measures necessary to prevent commercial transaction of Pacific bluefin tuna and its products that undermine the effectiveness of this CMM, especially measures prescribed in the paragraph 3 above. CCMs shall cooperate for this purpose.

13. CCMs shall cooperate to establish a catch documentation scheme (CDS) to be applied to Pacific bluefin tuna in accordance with the **Attachment** 2 of this CMM.

14. CCMs shall also take measures necessary to strengthen monitoring and data collecting system for Pacific bluefin tuna fisheries and farming in order to improve the data quality and timeliness of all the data reporting.

15. CCMs shall report to the Executive Director by 15 June annually measures they used to implement paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14 and 17 of this CMM. CCMs shall also monitor the international trade of the products derived from Pacific bluefin tuna and report the results to the Executive Director by 15 June annually. The Northern Committee shall annually review those reports CCMs submit pursuant to this paragraph and if necessary, advise a CCM to take an action for enhancing its compliance with this CMM.

16. The WCPFC Executive Director shall communicate this CMM to the IATTC Secretariat and its contracting parties whose fishing vessels engage in fishing for Pacific bluefin tuna in EPO and request them to take equivalent measures in conformity with this CMM.

17. To enhance effectiveness of this measure, CCMs are encouraged to communicate with and work with the concerned IATTC contracting parties through the Joint IATTC and WCPFC-NC Working Group on

[4] For the category described a.2 of paragraph 8~~7~~, the TCC shall assess in year 20XX its implementation during the management year that starts 1 April 20XX-1 (e.g., in the 2020 compliance review, the TCC will assess Japan's implementation for its fisheries licensed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries during calendar-year 2019 and for its other fisheries during 1 April 2019 through 31 March 2020.

the Management of Pacific Bluefin Tuna or bilaterally.

18. The provisions of paragraphs 2 and 3 shall not prejudice the legitimate rights and obligations under international law of those small island developing State Members and participating territories in the Convention Area whose current fishing activity for Pacific bluefin tuna is limited, but that have a real interest in fishing for the species, that may wish to develop their own fisheries for Pacific bluefin tuna in the future.

19. The provisions of paragraph 18 shall not provide a basis for an increase in fishing effort by fishing vessels owned or operated by interests outside such developing coastal State, particularly Small Island Developing State Members or participating territories, unless such fishing is conducted in support of efforts by such Members and territories to develop their own domestic fisheries.

20. This CMM replaces CMM 2024-01 and is reviewed and replaced in 2028~~2023-02~~. ~~On the basis of a new stock assessment conducted by ISC, the harvest strategy based on the management strategy evaluation expected to be completed in 2025, fair and equitable balance of fishing opportunities between the WCPO and the EPO as well as among Members, and other pertinent information such as the impact of climate change, as appropriate, this CMM shall be reviewed and may be amended as appropriate in 2026.~~

Attachment 1

Small fish catch limit (<30kg)

(Biennial basis)

Year		2027-2028	2029-2030	2031-2032
(a)	Initial biennial catch limit			
(b)	Overage/Underage of the previous biennial catch limit(1)			
(c)	Transfer to large fish catch limit with conversion factor 6.37(2)			
(d)	Transfer to large fish catch limit with conversion factor 1.47			
(e)	Adjusted biennial catch limit (= (a) ± (b) - (c) - (d))			
(f)	Actual biennial catch			
(g)	Overage/Underage (= (e) - (f))			

(Annual basis)

Year		2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
(h)	Initial annual catch limit(3)						
(i)	Overage/Underage of the previous biennial catch limit(1)						
(j)	Transfer to large fish catch limit with conversion factor 6.37(2)						
(k)	Transfer to large fish catch limit with conversion factor 1.47						
(l)	Adjusted annual catch limit (= (h) ± (i) - (j) - (k))						
(m)	Actual annual catch						
(n)	Overage/Underage (= (l) - (m))						

(1) Carry-over of underage to the following biennium shall be up to 17% of the initial biennial catch limit ((a)).

(2) Transfer to large fish catch limit with the conversion factor 6.37 shall be up to 20% and 35% of the initial biennial small fish catch limit ((a)) for Japan and Korea, respectively.

(3) The sum of the Initial annual catch limit and the annual use of underage from the previous year ((h)+(i)) shall be up to 62.5% of the initial biennial catch limit ((a)).

Large fish catch limit (≧30kg)

(Biennial basis)

Year		2027-2028	2029-2030	2031-2032
(A)	Initial biennial catch limit			
(B)	Overage/Underage of the previous biennial catch limit[4]			
(C)	Transfer to large fish catch limit with conversion factor 6.37[5]			
(D)	Transfer to large fish catch limit with conversion factor 1.47			
(E)	Adjusted biennial catch limit (= (A) ± (B) + (C) + (D))			
(F)	Actual biennial catch			
(G)	Overage/Underage (= (E) - (F))			

(Annual basis)

Year		2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
(H)	Initial annual catch limit[6]						
(I)	Overage/Underage of the previous biennial catch limit[4]						
(J)	Transfer to large fish catch limit with conversion factor 6.37[5]						
(K)	Transfer to large fish catch limit with conversion factor 1.47						
(L)	Adjusted annual catch limit (= (H) ± (I) + (J) + (K))						
(M)	Actual annual catch						
(N)	Overage/Underage (=(L) - (M))						

(4) Carry-over of underage to the following biennium shall be up to 17% of the initial biennial catch limit ((A)).

(5) Transfer to large fish catch limit with the conversion factor 6.37 shall be up to 20% and 35% of the initial biennial small fish catch limit ((a)) for Japan and Korea, respectively.

(6) The sum of the Initial annual catch limit and the annual use of underage from the previous year ((H)+(I)) shall be up to 62.5% of the initial biennial catch limit ((A)).

Development of a Catch Document Scheme for Pacific Bluefin Tuna

Background

At the 1st joint working group meeting between NC and IATTC, held in Fukuoka, Japan from August 29 to September 1, 2016, participants supported to advance the work on the Catch Documentation Scheme (CDS) in the next joint working group meeting, in line with the development of overarching CDS framework by WCPFC and taking into account of the existing CDS by other RFMOs.

1. Objective of the Catch Document Scheme

The objective of CDS is to combat IUU fishing for Pacific Bluefin Tuna (PBF) by providing a means of preventing PBF and its products identified as caught by or originating from IUU fishing activities from moving through the commodity chain and ultimately entering markets.

2. Use of electronic scheme

Whether CDS will be a paper based scheme, an electronic scheme or a gradual transition from a paper based one to an electronic one should be first decided since the requirement of each scheme would be quite different.

3. Basic elements to be included in the draft conservation and management measure (CMM)

It is considered that at least the following elements should be considered in drafting CMM.

(1) Objective
(2) General provision
(3) Definition of terms
(4) Validation authorities and validating process of catch documents and re-export certificates
(5) Verification authorities and verifying process for import and re-import
(6) How to handle PBF caught by artisanal fisheries
(7) How to handle PBF caught by recreational or sport fisheries
(8) Use of tagging as a condition for exemption of validation
(9) Communication between exporting members and importing members
(10) Communication between members and the Secretariat
(11) Role of the Secretariat
(12) Relationship with non-members
(13) Relationship with other CDSs and similar programs
(14) Consideration to developing members
(15) Schedule for introduction
(16) Attachment
(i) Catch document forms
(ii) Re-export certificate forms
(iii) Instruction sheets for how to fill out forms
(iv) List of data to be extracted and compiled by the Secretariat

4. Work plan

2027 The joint working will hold a technical meeting to finalize the draft CDS CMM.

~~The following schedule may need to be modified, depending on the progress on the WCPFC CDS for tropical tunas.~~

~~2017 The joint working group will submit this concept paper to the NC and IATTC for endorsement. NC will send the WCPFC annual meeting the recommendation to endorse the paper.~~

~~2018 The joint working group will hold a technical meeting, preferably around its meeting, to materialize the concept paper into a draft CMM. The joint working group will report the progress to the WCPFC via NC and the IATTC, respectively.~~

~~2019 The joint working group will hold a second technical meeting to improve the draft CMM. The joint working group will report the progress to the WCPFC via NC and the IATTC, respectively.~~

~~20XX The joint working group will hold a third technical meeting to finalize the draft CMM. Once it is finalized, the joint working group will submit it to the NC and the IATTC for adoption. The NC will send the WCPFC the recommendation to adopt it.~~